

PBS MacNEIL/LEHRER
9 August 1984

CONGRESS/
SALVADORAN AID

LEHRER: President Reagan said in a written statement today, his Central American aid package with a \$117 million in military aid to El Salvador is vitally urgent. He urged Congress to authorize it without further delay. But since Congress breaks for its summer recess tomorrow that doesn't leave much time. And the division between the House and Senate on the El Salvador issue is a wide one. The House having passed a version with the special \$117 million out, last night the Senate passing one with it in. Judy Woodruff reports on the administration's efforts to win final passage and the debate about it. Judy.

WOODRUFF: Jim, a joint House-Senate conference committee is just now sitting down to work to resolve the issue. And in preparation for that the administration has pulled out all the stops to help make the case that El Salvador needs extra military aid. The U.S. Ambassador to Salvador, Thomas Pickering, and the top U.S. general in Central America, Paul Gorman, have both been up on Capitol Hill, trying to persuade legislators that the Salvadoran government is fighting rebels armed by Nicaragua. To back up those contentions, the State Department yesterday released, for the first time publicly, what it has been talking about for months privately. Intelligence films, taken at night, by planes using night-seeing photographic equipment. As one example, on the night of July 10, U.S. intelligence agents, flying in a AC-130 aircraft, photographed a large shrimp boat and two small boats 10 miles off the coast of El Salvador. The videotape and narration of that incident that we will show you now were prepared by the State Department. UNIDENTIFIED ANNOUNCER: You are now observing the shrimper and the two boats on low-light television. The shrimper, which is 75 feet in length, has a smaller boat in tow. It has its outriggers extended on both sides, as if to give the appearance of fishing. It is running with lights on, also to avoid suspicion. The two smaller boats, both 18 feet in length, have square-shaped sterns. It is likely that the shrimper had completed a transfer of material to the two 18 foot boats just prior to the arrival of the *'bill kirk.' When the shrimper realized that the *'bill kirk' aircraft was overhead, it began to move away from the smaller boats in a southwesterly direction, towards open seas. The shrimper quickly attained high speed, again, not indicative of normal shrimping procedure. For the time being, the two 18-foot boats remained in place. Upon the arrival of the *'bill kirk', the two boats pushed apart and began to move toward the Salvadoran coast. The boats quickly attained high speed, estimated at between 20 and 25 knots. On three occasions during the boat's movement toward shore one of the boats stopped, apparently to check

Continued